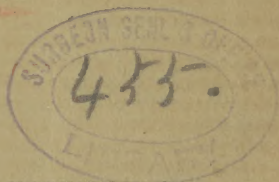


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REPORT OF CASES
OF
POISONING

FROM
EXALGINE, CANNABIS INDICA,
ARSENIC, AND CAMPHOR.

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REPORT OF CASES OF POISONING FROM EXALGINE, CANNABIS INDICA, ARSENIC, AND CAMPHOR.

CASE of Exalgine Poisoning from Overdose taken by Mistake.—Ten centigrammes ($1\frac{2}{3}$ grains) were ordered every half-hour, and 40 centigrammes were taken instead every half-hour until four doses or 1.60 grammes (24 grains) were taken in two hours.

Dr. S., aged about 25 years, generally in good health, consulted me April 15, 1890, for severe headache, from which he had been suffering for several days. Digestion was impaired and the bowels were constipated.

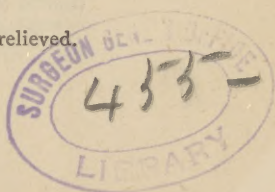
I prescribed a mixture of Fowler's solution, bismuth, and pepsin, together with a suitable diet, and gave strychnine, aloin, and belladonna pills for the constipation.

Two days later, April 17, he again called at my office and stated that his headache was no better. I ordered 1 gramme (15 grains) of phenacetin in three doses, a dose every three hours until relieved.

This also failed to give relief, and the next day, April 18, he remained in bed and sent for me. At this time I prescribed,—

R Exalgine, 1 gramme;
Sacch., 1 gramme.
In ten powders.

Sig.—One to be taken every half hour, until relieved.



This prescription was compounded at the nearest drug-store, with the result that one *drachm* of exalgine instead of one *gramme* was put up, making each powder contain over six grains instead of ten centigrammes ($1\frac{2}{3}$ grains).

The rest of the story I let the patient tell in his own words. Suffice it to say that the case developed into one of typhoid fever, and, on account of his unfavorable surroundings in a boarding-house, I had him conveyed on the 22d of April to the Garfield Hospital, where the disease ran a favorable course to recovery in the usual time.

Report of Dr. S.—I was taken sick last spring with typhoid fever, and as a consequence experienced the usual symptoms attending the invasion of that disease,—viz., lassitude, loss of appetite, disorders of the intestinal canal, and headache, the latter becoming the most prominent of all, and calling for immediate treatment.

The day before being confined to my bed I consulted Dr. Prentiss for relief of my head symptoms, and he prescribed phenacetin in 30-centigramme doses every three hours. I took the three doses ordered without, however, feeling the slightest appreciable effect; in fact, I gradually became worse, so that the next morning I was unable to leave my bed.

My headache proving more excruciatingly painful, I sent for the doctor, who, on finding me worse than the day before, ordered another drug, exalgine, in 10-centigramme doses, with an equal amount of sugar.

He left the prescription to be filled, and at

noon it was taken to the nearest drug-store and there put up. The druggist, as it was afterwards ascertained, mistaking the metric formula 1 gramme for *one drachm*, made the doses four times too large. I took the first powder at 1 P.M., to be followed by the others every half-hour as directed.

This I did until the fourth dose was taken, at which time I had experienced no amelioration in my condition. Being somewhat restless, and thinking a change of posture would relieve me, I arose from bed and stood for a few moments leaning my head against the mantelpiece. I had stood there but a few minutes when I felt a gradual but marked sensation of weakness come over me, and I hurried back to bed. I had scarcely touched my pillow before I became aware that it was something more than a mere fainting attack, and that I might become alarmingly ill. I sprang from my bed, rang the bell, which was several feet away, and had just strength enough left me to get back to bed. I was now utterly exhausted ; my heart was beating at a tremendous rate, though full and strong, and a profuse perspiration broke out, particularly over my face.

So far as I can now remember, the action of the heart kept on increasing every minute during the half-hour's attack, but I cannot positively state that. Certain it is, it did not lessen, and although I had no means of ascertaining the pulse-rate, I have no hesitation in saying that it must have reached as high as 160 or 180 per minute, and probably even higher. All this time I was growing weaker, and a sense as of approaching death came

over me. The servant-girl, after telephoning for the doctor, returned and stood fanning me and wiping the perspiration from my face. Of course, what effect the drug had on my countenance I cannot say, but, as the girl afterwards declared that she expected me to die every minute, it is probable that my features portrayed the general exhaustion of my system. This, however, must be taken for what it is worth. I continued in this state for a full half-hour, as it was 2.45 when I rang the bell, and nearly 3.30 before the doctor arrived.

However, I took a tablespoonful of whiskey, and whether it was this stimulant or whether the effects of the drug were beginning to pass away I know not, but when the doctor came my pulse-beat was much reduced, perspiration had ceased, and though still very weak the effects of the drug had about passed away. I had almost forgotten to state a very important clinical fact connected with the action of this drug. Directly after the system was under the full effects of the drug, my headache, intense and severe as it was for fully twenty-four hours before, suddenly ceased, and I was free from this painful symptom during all the time I was under the influence of the drug; after it had fully passed away the headache returned, but in a milder form for a whole day. After this it came again with nearly the old-time severity, continuing for a week thereafter. At the end of that time it quite left me, and I was troubled no more with it during the rest of my sickness.

Note by Dr. Prentiss.—The call which I re-

ceived was a very urgent one, it being stated that the patient was dying.

Dr. W. K. Butler happened to be in my office at the time and went with me. We found the patient in the condition he describes, almost in collapse, with a rapid, feeble pulse, cold sweat, pinched expression of face, and great exhaustion. Under the free use of stimulants he soon rallied.

I called for the powders and at once noticed that they were much larger than had been ordered, and took them to the drug-store where they had been compounded and had one weighed. It weighed twelve grains. On questioning the druggist, he acknowledged he had put up one drachm instead of one gramme in ten powders.

Case of Intoxication from a Comparatively Small Dose of Cannabis Indica.—Dr. L., dentist by profession, aged 34 years, nervous temperament, was suffering from an irritable cough which prevented sleep at night.

He was directed to take 5 drops of Parke, Davis & Co.'s normal liquid of cannabis indica at bedtime.

The cough becoming troublesome, however, in the afternoon he took the 5 drops at three o'clock and began to feel the effect of it at five o'clock, and at six o'clock I was telephoned for in great haste, as it was stated that he was very ill.

When I reached the house I found him in bed, oblivious to all surroundings, being vigorously rubbed by several attendants, and evidently excessively happy. He would sway back and forth and laugh until the tears ran down his cheeks, then drop back on the pil-

low with an expression of heavenly ecstasy on his face.

I reassured the family that there was no danger, and prescribed bromide of potassium.

Desiring to know what the visions were that made him so happy, I shook him up roughly and shouted in his ear, to be sure and remember what he was seeing, that he must tell me about it in the morning.

The condition of ecstasy lasted until nine o'clock, when he fell asleep and slept soundly all night.

The next morning I questioned him about his visions. He said he was conscious of my demand that he should remember what was pleasing him so much and he tried to do so ; but the visions followed each other in such quick succession that he could only remember a small portion. He had no unpleasant sensations, all were agreeable.

When the medicine began to take effect, it appeared to come over his senses in a succession of waves until he lost himself.

One of his hallucinations was that the words he tried to say were immense entities, tangible, swelled up in his mouth so that he could not get them out, had to push them out bodily with his tongue ; it seemed an hour between each word. Another hallucination was that he was moving through space with lightning speed, and in his path were clouds of the most beautiful, ever-changing colors, and when he touched them, each one played a beautiful tune. Being a musician himself, he tried to fix some of the tunes that he might reproduce them, but the succession was so rapid that it was impossible.

Another idea was that his nose was of enormous size and extended down to his knees. When he tried to use his handkerchief, he reached down between his knees to wipe the nose, and an attendant was obliged to take his hand and guide it to the right place.

Another hallucination, the one that caused most hilarity, was an avenue of bottles, a row on each side, standing on their corks, all sizes and shapes,—long, slim bottles, stout pot-bellied bottles,—large and small,—all intent upon dancing comic jigs and trying to climb on top of each other. He was passing between this row at an immense speed, and their performance took place as he passed. This, together with the big nose, was what caused the immoderate laughter.

The idea in his mind was that these performances had been arranged for his exclusive amusement.

The next day he had fully recovered from the effects of the drug.

Case of Arsenic-Poisoning by the Introduction of Paste of Arsenic and Creosote into the Ear for Earache.—Miss J., 32 years of age, was taken with earache May 25, 1890, for which she dropped into the ear a solution of equal parts of glycerin and laudanum. This not giving relief, she remembered a little bottle of creosote and arsenic, left in the house by a relative who was a dentist, and which she had a short time previously used successfully for toothache.

She reasoned that if it would cure toothache, it ought to cure earache, so she got the bottle, took out a portion about the size of the

end of her finger (I should think one gramme), mixed it with glycerin, and poured it in the ear.

There was immediately burning pain, the meatus and external ear swelling and becoming inflamed.

It was supposed that an abscess was forming, and that it would soon discharge, giving relief.

I did not see the case until May 29, four days after the poison had been applied.

When first seen, a slough had formed, involving the whole external meatus, all of the external ear, except a small portion of the helix above. Anteriorly the slough extended for half an inch over the tissues in front of the ear. The slough was grayish white, firm, and while a line of demarcation formed, the slough showed no disposition to separate.

She suffered severely from neuralgic pain in the temple, brow, and ear.

There was almost complete paralysis of that side of the face.

She was under my care from the above date, May 29, until July 15, when she died.

The symptoms, in addition to those just stated, were vomiting and purging, pain in the abdomen and great prostration.

The treatment was nourishing diet, stimulants, and opium to relieve pain.

Local treatment consisted in poultices of charcoal, irrigation with hot water, and later a powder of boric acid, bismuth, and morphine.

The pulse, which at first was but little accelerated, became quicker and quicker as the exhaustion became marked. There was very little rise of temperature.

On June 16 the pulse was 120 and the

temperature 99° F. Towards the last she sank into a condition of coma.

July 10.—The pulse was 54.

July 13.—The pulse was 60.

July 14.—The pulse was 136.

July 15.—Died, having been comatose for nearly a month.

Poisoning by Camphor.—M. C., a healthy girl, 11 years of age, called at a drug-store and asked for something to cure a cold.

She was given 5-grain camphor pills, with instruction to take one every two hours.

She took one at nine, one at twelve, and one at two o'clock.

Fifteen minutes after the last one she was sitting on a piano-stool, when she fell backward in a convulsion.

Shortly after, she vomited, the ejecta having a strong odor of camphor. The convulsions recurred soon after she was put to bed.

There was headache both before and after each convulsion. The pulse was weak.

She was given bromide of potassium and elixir of calisaya, and she made a rapid recovery.

This case is of interest, as showing that camphor is not the innocent drug it is popularly believed to be, but is capable of producing poisonous action even in comparatively small doses.

I have notes of another case, where a woman took two teaspoonfuls of spirits of camphor to produce abortion, with the effect of causing convulsions and likewise abortion. She had a narrow escape with her life.

